

THE
POPISH DOCTRINE
OF
TRANSUBSTANTIATION
Not agreeable to the Opinion of the
PRIMITIVE FATHERS.

Shewed in a Letter to a Friend.

I Do now according to my Promise send you this Writing to justify the Assertion I made concerning the Novelty of the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, wherein (if you are not blinded by Prejudice and Implicite Faith, the fatal causes of Ignorance & Error in the Roman Church) you may plainly see that the Primitive Fathers were far from holding Transubstantiation, that they believed the direct contrary; indeed we have from the Writings of the Fathers so many plain places against this Doctrine of Transubstantiation that we cannot conceive how it came into the World; so that notwithstanding the Papists pretence to Antiquity in this point, we shall find upon a serious trial they are meer Gibeonites, who have made use of their moldy Brea and clouted Shoes to deceive the People of the Lord. But before I produce the testimony and Sence of the Fathers I will first lay down the Doctrine of the Church of Rome, as it was established by the Council of Trent * *Concil. Trid. Sess. 13. C. 4.* viz. *That there is a conversion of the whole substance of Bread and Wine into the substance of Christs Body and Blood wrought by the words of Consecration.* And that the Fathers of *Ant* might compel all men to assent to this monstrous Doctrine, they have added a severe curse in these words,

Words, viz. If any man shall say that in the Sacrament of the Sacred Eucharist, there remains the substance of Bread and Wine after Consecration let him be accursed: Concil. Trid. de Transub, Can. 2. How contrary this Doctrine is to the belief of the Primitive Fathers I shall now shew you.

And the first I shall name is Dyonisius Areopagita who was St. Paul's Disciple, and lived about the first Century, who distinguishing between the substantial Signs and Christ signified by them, expresses himself in *Eccles. Hierarch. cap. 3.* these words, By those reverend Signs and Symbols Christ

is signified, and the Faithful made partakers of him. You see what this Saint believed; he held not that Christ in this Sacrament was sacrificed unto his Father, but calls the Sacrament a Typical or symbolical Sacrifice, that is, a Figure or Sign of it; this is so plain an instance, *Bel. lib. 2. de Euch. c. 15.* that the great Cardinal Bellarmine confesses that Dyonisius calls the Sacrament an Antitype even after Consecration, so that by the Confession of our Adversaries, this Primitive Saint is allowed to be on our side, for he calls the Elements of Bread and Wine Signs and Symbols even after Consecration.

Apol. 2. p. 98. Edit. Paris 1636. Justin Martyr who lived about the 150th year of Christ says expressly, That our blood and flesh are

nourished by the conversion of that food which we receive in the Eucharist. The next I shall name is Tertullian, who lived about the 200th year of Christ; Tertullian's words are these, *Adversus Marcion l. 4. c. 4. Lib. de Anima p. 319.* Christ taking the bread, and distributing it to his Disciples made it his body, saying, This is my Body, that is to say, a figure of my Body; And elsewhere

arguing against the Sceptick who denied the certainty of Sences, he useth this Argument, That if we question our Sences, we may doubt whether our Blessed Saviour was not deceived in what he heard, and saw, and touched; he might (says he) be deceived in the voice from heaven, in the smell of the Ointment with which he was anointed against his burial, and in the taste of the Wine which he consecrated in remembrance of his Blood: so that it seems we are to trust our Sences, even in the matter of the Sacrament, and if that be true the doctrine of Transubstantiation is certainly false.

in Dialog. contra Marcion. Origen who lived much about the same time with Tertullian, calls the Bread and the Chalice, the signs of the body and blood of Christ, and so not the very natural body and blood of Christ; and in another place he saith, That which is consecrated by Gods Word and Prayer, as to the matter

of it, goeth into the belly and is voided into the draught. Cardinal Perron is so angry at Origen for this saying, that he says he talks like a Heretick in this place. What can be more plain than what St. Ambrose says on this occasion, his words are these, *The Bread and Wine are what they were and yet are changed into another thing.* Theodoret speaks more plainly yet, even to the philosophy of this Question, Christ (says he) *honoured the symbols and the signs with the title of his body and blood, not changing the nature, but to nature adding grace, for neither do the mystical signs recede from their nature, for they abide in their proper substance, figure & form, and may be seen & toucht.* Eusebius saith, *That Christ gave his Disciples the symbols of divine Oeconomy, commanding the Image and type of his body to be made.*

de Sacram. l. 4. c. 4.

dial. 1. c. 18.

dial. 2. c. 24.

demonst. Evang. l. 1. c. 1.

St. Gregory Nazianzen speaks so expressly in this matter, as if he had purposely undertaken the confutation of the Doctrine of Transubstantiation; now (says he) *we shall be partakers of the Paschal Supper, but still in a Figure, though more clear than in the old Law, for the Legal Passover (I will not be afraid to speak of it) was a more obscure Figure of a Figure.*

Orat. 2. in Pasch.

St. Austin, who is justly esteemed the Oracle of the Latin Fathers and Western Churches, says, *That indeed this is a miserable bondage of the Soul, to take the Signs in stead of the things signified:* But more particularly this great Doctor and Saint brings in Christ thus speaking to his Disciples, viz. "You are not to eat this Body which you see, or to drink that Blood which my Crucifiers shall pour forth, I have commended to you the Sacrament, which being spiritually understood, shall quicken you, Christ brought them to a Banquet, in which he commended to his Disciples the Figure of his Body and Blood, for he sd not doubt to say, "This is my Body, when he gave the sign of his Body. *And in another place he expresses himself much plainer in these words,* "How shall I lay hold on him who is absent? "How shall I reach my hands unto the Heavens "and touch him who sits there? send th, Faith thither (saith he) and thou hast him sure.

de Doctrina Christiana l. 3. c. 5.

in Psal. 98.

And elsewhere he saith,

cont. Adamant. c. 12.

in Joh. Tract. 50.

'Twas well for this Holy Father that he lived long before the Councils of Lateran and Trent, or else he had been certainly condemned for a Heretick, for never did any man talk more like a Protestant than he.

in 1 Cor. cap. 10.

Chrys. & Cæsar. Monach.

Macar. Homil. 27.

of his Flesh and Blood, and they who are partakers of the visible bread do spiritually eat the flesh of the Lord.

de duabus nat. in Christo cont. Eutich. & Nest. p. 233. Bas. ed. 1528.

St. Chrysostom speaks to the same purpose in these words, *What is that which the Bread signifies? the Body of Christ, you see, he calls it Bread, and says it signifieth the body of Christ.* And in another place he says, *That after Consecration the Bread is worthy of the name of the Body of Christ, although the nature of the Bread remains still in it.*

St. Macarius, Scholar to St. Anthony, saith, *That in the Church Bread and Wine are offered; the Type of his Flesh and Blood, and they who are partakers of the visible bread do spiritually eat the flesh of the Lord.*

No man expresses himself more plainly in this matter than Pope Galatius, whose words are these, *The Sacraments which we receive of the Body and Blood of Christ are a divine thing, by means whereof we are made partakers of the Divine Nature, and yet the substance of Bread and Wine doth not cease to be:* If it be here answered, that after Popes have declared otherwise, I have but one request to desire of them, viz. to make it appear that when two Popes shall determine both parts of a contradiction to be true, they both are infallible in so doing.

I might quote St. Cyprian, St. Basil, St. Hierom, Hillary, Fulgentius, Isidore, Hesychius, and many others of note who lived within 800 years of Christ; but those I have produced are sufficient for particular instances; to all which I may add the Suffrage of a whole Council held at Constantinople, Anno 754. (which Council condemned the use of Images) (Mark that) wherein it was maintained, that Christ chose no other Shape or Type under Heaven to represent his Incarnation by, but the Sacrament, which he delivered to his Ministers, for a Type, and most effectual Commemoration thereof, commanding the substance of Bread and Wine to be offered: These Assertions are to be found in the Third Tome of the Sixth Action of the second Council of Nice.

Thus Sir, you see plainly that the belief of the Elements remaining Bread and Wine after Consecration, was the constant Doctrine of the Christian Church for 700 years after Christ; and peaceably continued so in the Latin or Roman Church, till Paschasius Radboudus, (who lived about the year of our Lord 850) first

first broached the new Doctrine of the same Body of Christ being in the Sacrament, which was born of the Blessed Virgin; but *Paschasius* met with great Opposition from the most Learned Divines of that Age, particularly from *John Scotus* or *Erigena*, who at the request of *Carolus Calvus* (in whose Court he then lived) delivered his Opinion, which was direct contrary to the Judgment of *Paschasius*, for *Scotus* affirmed, *That there was no substantial Change, and that the Sacrament was only a bare Commemoration of the Body and Blood of Christ*: Whereas *Paschasius* asserted, *That the very same Body of Christ which was born of the Blessed Virgin, was invisibly present under the Accidents of Bread and Wine*: And that *Scotus* set himself to prove from the Fathers, that what was consecrated on the Altar was not truly and really the Body and Blood of Christ, *Ascelinus* shews us in his Epistle to *Berengarius*; but this Judgment of *Scotus* not stopping the growing Mischief, and a Schism being likely to break out in the Western Church. *Carolus Calvus* being desirous to compose the Differences of the Church, sends to *Bertram* an eminent and learned Divine of that Age, to deliver his *Bertr. de Corp. & Sang. Dom.* Judgment in this matter, namely, Whether the Body and Blood of Christ, which in the Church is received by the Mouth of the Faithful, be celebrated in a Mystery or in Truth, and whether it be the same Body which was born of *Mary*? To which *Bertram* returns this answer, *That the Bread and Wine are the Body and Blood of Christ figuratively; and that this Body is the Pledge, and the Figure of the other very natural Body, that the substance of the Creatures, that which they were before Consecration, the same are they also after*. And much more to the same purpose, all which he proves by Scripture and Fathers; and addressing himself to *Carolus Calvus*, he says, *Your Wisdom most excellent Prince may perceive that I have proved by the Testimonies of Scripture and Fathers (mark that) That the Bread which is called Christs Body, and the Cup which is called his Blood, is a Figure because it is a Mystery*. Thus far did that learned Divine assert the ancient Doctrine of the Church against the new Doctrine of Transubstantiation? and as he condemned *Paschasius*, so likewise he did *Scotus*, because he would allow no Mystery: For *Bertram* says, *To what purpose did Christ promise his Flesh to be the Food of his People, which being not to be understood Carnally and Literally must have a Spiritual Signification, so that tho' as to their outward appearance the Sacramental Elements are Figures, yet according to the Invisible Power and Efficacy they are the Body and Blood of Christ*: Which is the Doctrine of our Church. Of the same Opinion with *Bertram* was *Rabanus Maurus* the greatest Divine of his Age, who wrote his Epistle to *Egilo* against them who had lately broached that Doctrine (mark that) *That the body of Christ in the Sacrament was the very same which was born of the blessed Virgin, as appears by his Epistle to Herebasus still extant*. And as
this

this Doctrine of Transubstantiation was but lately broached in the Western Church, in *Rabanus* his Time, so 'tis certain it continued but a disputable Question, even in the ninth and tenth Ages of the Church, and did not compleatly become an Article of Faith till a thousand Years after Christ. So that it was near three hundred years before this mis-shapen Monster of Transubstantiation could be compleatly licked into that ridiculous Form it now bears in the Church of *Rome*. And what is very remarkable, 'tis certain that divers eminent Doctors of the Roman Church have expressed themselves dissatisfied concerning it, even since it has been decreed as an Article of Faith.

Durandus as good a Catholick, and as famous a Doctor as any of *Rome*, professed publicly, That even after Consecration the very matter of Bread remained. Cardinal *Cajetan* says, That Transubstantiation cannot be proved by Scripture. *Fisher* against the Captivity of Babylon *Apud Suar. T. 3. Disp. 46.* says, That no man can prove by the words of the Gospel that any Priest in these Days doth Consecrate the Body and Blood of Christ.

Petrus ab Alliaco, Cardinal of *Cambray* says, In 4. Sent. q. 6. Art. 2. That the Doctrine of the substance of Bread and Wine remaining after Consecration, is more easy and free from Absurdity, more rational, and no way repugnant to the Authority of Scripture; nay more, That for the other Doctrine, viz. of Transubstantiation, there is no evidence in Scripture.

Gabriel Biel, another Schoolman and Divine in Cannon. Miss. Lect. 40. of their Church, ingeniously confesses, That as to any thing expressed in the Cannon of the Scriptures, a man may believe that the substance of Bread and Wine doth remain after Consecration.

Erasmus, who lived and died in the Communion of the Roman Church, and who was as well acquainted with the Antient Fathers as any man, doth confess, That it was late before the Church defined Transubstantiation, unknown unto the Antients, both name and thing.

Tomstall de Sacramentis says, That it had been better to have left every man to his own conjecture, as they were before the Council of *Lateran*. (Mark that I beseech you) He would have every man left to his liberty, as Men were before the Council of *Lateran* therefore it is plain, that in his Opinion it was no

Article of Faith before that Council: To this purpose I have read of an expression of Bishop Foscal's of Durham who died in the Roman Communion, viz. *If he had been Chaplain to the Pope he would have begged on his knees that he would not define Transubstantiation, as knowing it would tend to the breach of the peace of the Church.* Indeed it is very pleasant to observe how some of their late Writers do handle this Subject; they are so perplexed about it, as if they had a Wolf by the Ears, they cannot tell how to hold it, and they are afraid to let it go.

Now, Sir, let me beg of you to observe, That no rational man can imagine that these learned Men of the Church of Rome would ever have granted the Antient Fathers to have been strangers to this Doctrine of Transubstantiation, had they thought it to have been the perpetual belief of the Church.

Upon the whole matter then, you see what the Primitive Fathers of the Christian Church have believed and taught for above seven hundred years after Christ; They held that the Bread and Wine in the Sacrament remain what they were before Consecration, that, that which is seen on the Holy Table is Bread, that the substance of Bread and Wine does not cease to be, that the Elements are Types, Symbols, and Figures of Christs Body and Blood, and if they say true, 'tis evident then that the Doctrine of Transubstantiation is a new invention, not so much as broacht till above seven hundred years after Christ. 2. If this be the uninterrupted Doctrine of the Primitive Fathers which I have now alledged, then this ought to caution you and all others against the Rhetorical Expressions of some of these Fathers I now have Quoted, whereby they call the Sacrament the Body and Blood of Christ, for we believe it is so; but then the Question is, after what manner it is so; whether after the manner of the Flesh, or after the manner of Spiritual Grace, and Sacramental Consequence; We of the Reformed Churches of these Nations, with the Primitive Fathers, believe and hold the Latter; the Church of Rome the former; against the Words of Scripture, the Doctrine of the Primitive Church, the nature and design of all Sacraments.

And therefore to worship the Host as the Papists do, must needs be gross and damnable Idolatry, and to be abhorred of all those who have a care of their Salvation. The most Learned of the Papists do confess, that if the substance of Bread and Wine do remain after Consecration, the Worshipers of the Host are as great Idolaters as they who worship a Red Cloth.

Indeed the most ingenious Persons of the Roman Church begin to be so sensible of the pernicious consequences of Transubstantiation, that they would be glad

to be rid of it if they could; but the Council of *Trent*, by making of it a necessary and essential Article of Faith, has tied it so fast to all Persons of that Communion, that now they cannot part with it if they would; it is (to use the words of a late ingenious Writer) like a great Millstone hung about the neck of Popery, which will certainly sink it at the last.

You see, Sir, this case is so plain that we need no more then to expose it to publick view without the help of *Dr. Thomas Gaudinè's Legislative Gothick*, or the addition of a Finger in the Margent to point to the Words, for any one of lesser parts and more sincerity than he, that runs may read them.

As for your good opinion of *Dr. Stillingfleet* and *Dr. Tillotson*, I must say 'tis but what they deserve: They have indeed baffled our Adversaries of *Rome*, even to the silencing of all that party: I must confess I am not worthy to give any just Character of those two great Lights of our Church, therefore I will be sparing of my cold Commendation, however, thus much I will venture to say, That whatever thanks or entertainment they have met with in this Age, I am sure in the next their Memories will be precious, and their name as far above detraction, as their Parts and Learning are above the reach of their Enemies. So I conclude.

Your humble Servant.

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